

Los Angeles County
DEPARTMENT OF
Human Resources

CEO
Chief Executive Office
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

CC COUNTY COUNSEL
LOS ANGELES COUNTY



A closer look at...

CHILDCARE - 2

FAMILY LEAVE - 9

MENTORSHIP - 16

APPENDICES - 24

INTRODUCTION

In March 2019, the County of Los Angeles (County) launched the “Los Angeles County Employee Climate Survey” (LACECS)¹ which was created in partnership with the Chief Executive Office (CEO), Women and Girls Initiative (WGI), Department of Human Resources (DHR), and County Counsel to take the temperature of various aspects of County culture and establish baseline measures concerning employee satisfaction and perceptions of fairness in the County workforce. The survey provided a detailed snapshot of County attitudes across five topics, with the intent of hosting focus groups to drill down on findings requiring a deeper understanding.

This report presents combined findings from the March 2019 LACECS, focus groups hosted by the WGI between May and July 2020, and a follow-up survey of the focus group participants on the topics of childcare, protected leaves and managing work and family responsibilities, and County mentorship opportunities.

¹On March 11, 2019, the LACECS was disseminated to all County employees, excluding contract staff and some hourly employees lacking access to email or internet service at work. We received an overall successful response rate of 35% (36,103 individual respondents), representing all departments within the County. The full report is available at: <https://lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/Employee-Climate-Survey-Final.pdf>.

A Closer Look at Childcare Needs in the County Workforce

This section examines “Childcare Needs in the County Workforce” and provides recommendations based on quantitative data collected from employees across the County via the Los Angeles County Employee Climate Survey (LACECS), which was fielded on March 11, 2019. The survey population was County employees, excluding contract employees and some hourly employees with no access to email or the internet at their workstations. The overall response rate was 35 percent (36,103 individual employee respondents), representing all departments within the County.² The Women and Girls Initiative conducted a series of follow-up focus groups of parents in the County workforce to provide in-depth qualitative responses to findings identified in the survey, consisting of 19 participants from 18 departments across the County. While these numbers are small in comparison to the number of initial survey respondents, we believe that the employee comments provide valuable qualitative data for determining the underlying basis for the reported findings.³

Across all measures, a majority of County LACECS respondents and focus group participants reported access to adequate childcare and high levels of support from co-workers when needing to attend to childcare needs. Of LACECS respondents who were parents, an overwhelming majority of respondents (87%) felt that the current childcare providers met their childcare needs. While at work, 76 percent of respondents reported that their co-workers were supportive of taking time off to attend to family needs. In combining the results of the LACECS and our focus groups we arrive at the following findings:

FINDING 1: Information from both LACECS and the County focus group reflected that some employees did not feel the County gave them enough information about County resources to assist them in identifying and accommodating their childcare needs.

FINDING 2: Some County LACECS respondents and focus group participants reported having been on lengthy waitlists to gain access to childcare, difficulties covering pre- and after-hours childcare, and inadequate access to last minute childcare needs.

² According to Forbes (2017) the average completion rate for employee surveys is 30-40 percent.

³ While 40 percent of LACECS parents reported needing childcare during non-traditional work hours, only 27 percent of our focus group participants reported needing evening or weekend childcare to perform their assigned County job, thus we did not feel we heard from enough employees needing this type of childcare to provide combined recommendations in this report. We will conduct additional focus groups on this topic. We also intend to hold additional focus groups on the topic of childcare specifically for parents who work non-traditional hours, which was a need identified from the findings in the LACECS.

LACECS Respondents' & Focus Group Participants' Childcare Need

Among LACECS respondents, one third who identified themselves as parents are currently or have been parents of a child under the age of four in the last five years. Gender non-binary respondents had the highest proportion of parents with small children (48%), followed by male respondents (33%) and then female respondents (31%). Sixty-five percent of respondents who are parents in the County currently have one child enrolled in childcare and 87 percent of those parents felt that the current childcare providers met their childcare needs. The current usage of childcare by respondents mimics the traditional work week. Eighty percent of parents reported using childcare four to five days a week. Less than 1 percent of mothers used childcare on an “as needed” basis, while 9 percent of men reported using irregular childcare.

A majority (60%) of current parents reported that they would need future access to childcare, mothers (68%) reported needing the most future access. The greatest demand for future childcare needs appears to be immediate or in the near future. Half of future childcare needs were predicted to be in the next 2 years. Additionally, 19 percent of respondents who were not currently parents reported that they would have childcare needs in the next three years.

Among focus group participants, 53 percent had childcare needs for one child, with the maximum number of children being three and 40 percent of focus group participants had need for childcare services for a baby. Like LACECS respondents, 87 percent of focus group participants reported having steady childcare needs from week to week. Overall, 62 percent of focus group participants reported that their current childcare needs were being met, 16 percent reported that their needs were sometimes met and 21 percent reported that they had unmet childcare needs. The greatest difference between the LACECS respondents and our focus group participants was how childcare needs were being met. Thirty-six percent of LACECS respondents reported their primary source of childcare being a family member (57% reported using licensed childcare providers), while 75 percent of focus group participants reported their primary source of childcare being a family member (17% reported using licensed childcare providers). We recognize the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the timing of these focus groups, and while our participants were largely in altered work arrangements as a result of the pandemic, participants were directed to focus their thoughts and discussions on childcare needs prior and emerging from the pandemic. This report will refer to work/childcare arrangements of employees during the pandemic when they aligned with their traditional work/childcare needs as County employees.

FINDING 1: Information from both LACECS and the County focus group reflected that some employees did not feel the County gave them enough information about County resources to assist them in identifying and accommodating their childcare needs.

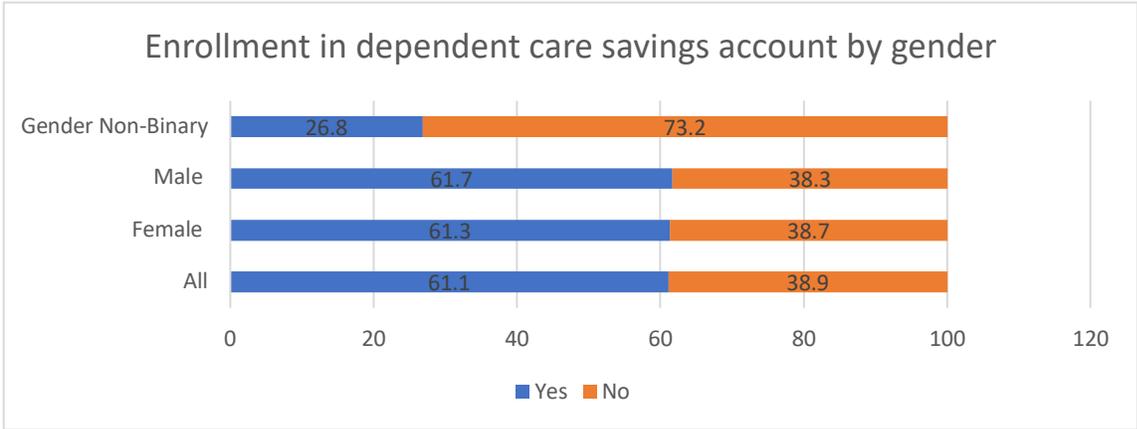
FROM THE LACECS

One third of *non-parent* survey respondents reported that they felt the County did enough to provide information to assist parents inquiring about childcare services. Among *parents*, 27 percent of respondents reported that they felt the County did enough to provide information to assist parents inquiring about childcare services. An overwhelming majority, 73 percent of parents felt the County did NOT do enough to provide information to assist parents inquiring about childcare services. Mothers and gender non-binary parents were most likely to report needing more information than fathers.

Does the County provide enough information to assist parents inquiring about childcare services?

	All	Female	Male	Gender Non-Binary
Yes	26.9	23.8	37.2	24.2
No	73.1	76.2	62.8	75.8

A large majority (68%) of parents had knowledge and understanding of the County’s Dependent Care Spending Account, and 61 percent of parents are currently enrolled in the County’s Dependent Care Spending Account.



FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS

Focus group participants identified gaps in information concerning childcare and flexible spending accounts. Participants wished the County would provide and publicize clearer information on both. The consensus in both focus groups was that the County has a fair amount of support for parents, but most employees learned of County support through other co-workers who were parents. One participant noted: “communication should be clearer, there is an underground network of how to figure things out regarding childcare.”

Another commented, “they [the County] could be more open about what is available for childcare; what I know, I’ve learned from coworkers who have kids.”

Participants also reported information deficits concerning the County’s Dependent Spending Accounts, those that reported knowing about this program were enrolled in it; while those that commented that they were unaware of the program were not enrolled in it. One participant noted, “having a background in payroll what is [Dependent Spending Accounts] is a very common question. New parents do not know what their options are.” One focus group concluded that it would be great if the County had a dedicated website for assistance and links to training, application, and program materials for parents that was widely publicized to all County employees.

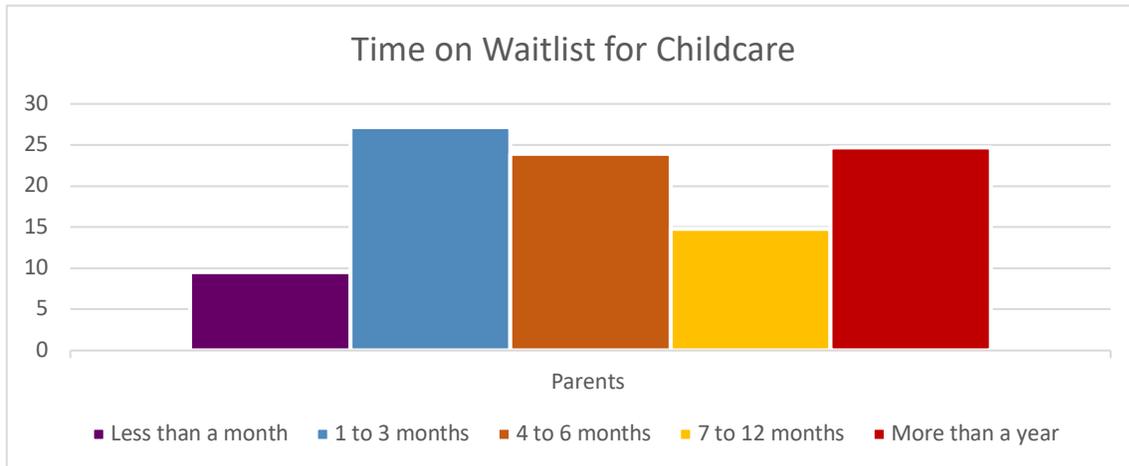
Key Recommendations

1. Create an informational campaign regarding assistance the County has available to parents including information on County run facilities.
Implementation Target Date: To Be Determined.
2. Produce an interactive and engaging introductory video concerning the County’s Dependent Care Spending Account benefit to increase enrollment in the program.
Implementation Target Date: To Be Determined.

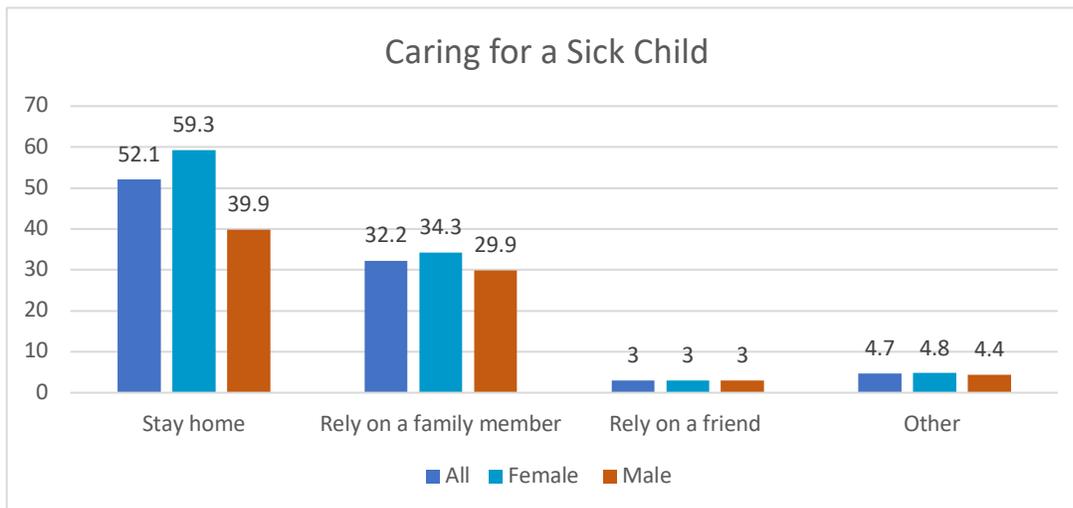
FINDING 2: Some County LACECS respondents and focus group participants reported having been on lengthy waitlists to gain access to childcare, difficulties covering pre- and after-hours childcare, and inadequate access to last minute childcare needs.

FROM THE LACECS

Among LACECS survey respondents, 15 percent of respondents that identify as parents are currently on a waiting list for childcare enrollment. 14 percent of mothers, 9.4 percent fathers are currently on a waitlist for childcare enrollment. The mode was one to three months currently on a waiting list; 27 percent of parents reported waiting this amount of time. A quarter of parents reported currently being on a waiting list for over a year. 10 percent of parents reported currently being on a waiting list less than a month.



40 percent of respondents stated that they had need for childcare during non-traditional work hours and 58 percent of these respondents did not feel that these needs were currently being met. Further, most respondents indicated they stayed home from work when they had a sick child. Women reported higher instances of staying home to care for sick children (+20%) and relying on a family member to care of sick children (+5%) than men; indicating that women may have more responsibility for arranging the care of sick children among County parents.



FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS

The conversations from our focus groups gave us more detail on some of the findings in the LACECS. Many of the focus group participants were on waitlists to access their current childcare option, and the most common reasons for choosing waitlisted facilities were: 1. Affordability of facility; 2. Services/amenities offered; 3. Convenience of facility location. A large unfilled need that was identified by participants arose from the logistics associated with transporting children and work commutes. Participants overwhelmingly identified a specific need for transportation assistance to and from childcare facilities for

children and access to partial day childcare for 1-2 hours before and after school, to accommodate County work commutes.

Another need that presented challenges for our focus group participants and LACECS respondents alike was unscheduled childcare needs due to schedule changes and illness. Both sets of participants reported that their most frequently used method of childcare in these situations was to enlist the help of family when possible or to stay home from work to care for children. One focus group participant noted that this situation can be extra difficult for parents with children who have health conditions, sharing, “I have one child who has a health condition and it’s hard to shift work schedules last minute. We could call on my wife’s parents in an emergency...but once I had to take my kid into the office because of lack of childcare on Friday and got called out for it [by their supervisor].” Another participant noted that in instances of last minute or sick childcare needs, “in a lot of homes that follow traditional gender norms women are left with the burden.”

When asked about the possibility of having access to more County run childcare facilities, most participants noted that cost would be a great concern, with the consensus being that a sliding scale based on income would be important. Another point of consensus was that County run facilities should offer partial day or drop in options. One very promising trend noted across all participants was the possibilities presented by recent increased telework options as the result of the County’s pandemic working arrangements. Many participants commented on how they were able to arrange their work from home schedules to meet their childcare needs, without sacrificing productivity. Participants felt well supported by their managers in balancing these two goals and felt they had more flexibility to do both in a home setting. Participants expressed a high level of support for retaining increased telework options when possible once the pandemic has subsided and it is safe for County employees to return to more traditional office and worksite settings.

Key Recommendations:

1. Investigate the business case for increasing County childcare options, alternative scheduling, and telework days for sick or on demand childcare needs as many parents stay home from work when their children are sick.
Implementation Target Date: September 1, 2021
2. Increase childcare access to reduce waitlists currently used by many County parents given that the parental population is expected to grow as future parents have children in need of services.⁴
Implementation Target Date: To Be Determined.

⁴ 19 percent of LACECS respondents reported that they were not currently parents at the time of the survey but were planning on becoming parents and would need childcare in the next three years. Additionally, 60 percent of LACECS respondents who reported being parents reported they would need additional access to childcare in the next three years.

3. Work with Department of Public Health's Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (formerly the Office of Child Care) and the Child Care Planning Committee to explore creation of additional County-run childcare centers – open to children of both County and non-County employees.

Implementation Target Date: To Be Determined.

4. Use the lessons learned from telework expansion during COVID-19 to provide employees with routine part-time and full-time telework opportunities where appropriate.

Implementation Target Date: Ongoing

A Closer Look at Protected Leaves and Managing Work and Family Care Responsibilities

This section considers “Family Friendly Leaves in the County” and produces recommendations based on quantitative data collected from employees across the County via the Los Angeles County Employee Climate Survey (LACECS), which was fielded on March 11, 2019. The survey population was County employees, excluding contract employees and some hourly employees with no access to email or the internet at their workstations. The overall response rate was 35 percent (36,103 individual employee respondents), representing all departments within the County.⁵ The Women and Girls Initiative conducted a series of three follow-up focus groups on “Family Friendly Leaves” which included 28 participants from 22 departments across the County. While these numbers are small in comparison to the number of initial survey respondents, we believe that the employee comments provide valuable qualitative data for determining the underlying basis for the reported recommendations. In combining the results of the LACECS and our focus groups we arrive at the following findings:

FINDING 1: Both LACECS respondents and focus group participants agreed that the County generally offers a supportive environment for leave, but some focus group participants noted that variations and inconsistent information dissemination across departments made some employees feel more supported than others.

FINDING 2: Comments from the County focus group reflected some LACECS respondents who felt that taking family leaves might harm their careers.

FINDING 3: Comments from the County focus group reflected that some employees do not feel or were unsure that they have access to scheduling options that best support their family caregiving responsibilities.

FINDING 4: Some focus group respondents reported a lack of understanding regarding how paid time off is associated with family leaves, and as personally being unable to afford to take the maximum amount of time provided by County leave policies.

⁵ According to Forbes (2017) the average completion rate for employee surveys is 30-40 percent.

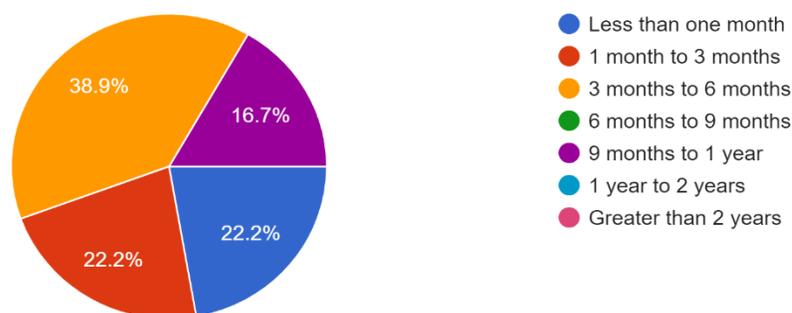
Leaves Taken by LACECS Respondents and Focus Group Participants

LACECS respondents were asked about their use of three types of protected family leaves over the last five years: care for dependent adult, birth or adoption of a child and care for a dependent child. Almost one fifth of respondents took leave to care for an adult family member within the last five years. Women took the most leave for adult care responsibilities; men and gender non-binary respondents took the same amount of leave for adult care responsibilities. Seven percent of respondents took a leave for the birth or adoption of a child in the last 5 years, 20 percent of all respondents identifying themselves as parents took this leave. Men and women were equally likely to take leave for the birth or adoption of a child, gender non-binary respondents were slightly more likely to take this leave. Six percent of all respondents took leave to care for a dependent child in the last 5 years. Approximately one fifth of men and women who identified as parents took leave for the care of a child, while a quarter of gender non-binary parents took leave for the care of a child.

Among focus group participants, 83 percent of the focus group participants had taken a form of protected family leave in the past 5 years, and the remaining had plans to take a form of protected leave in the next 5 years. Of those participants that reported taking leave in the past 5 years, 75 percent of participants had taken a leave for the birth or adoption of a child, 83 percent of participants had taken leave to care for a sick child, and 78 percent of participants had taken leave to care for an adult family member. Below is a summary of leaves duration taken among participants:

In total, how long were you on a family related leave over the past 5 years?

18 responses



FINDING 1: Both LACECS respondents and focus group participants agreed that the County generally offers a supportive environment for leave, but some focus group participants noted that variations and inconsistent information dissemination across departments made some employees feel more supported than others.

FROM THE LACECS

An overwhelming majority of respondents reported that their co-workers were supportive of their taking time off to attend to family needs (76% of employees agreed, 10% of employees disagreed). Men reported the highest level of agreement; women agreed approximately 5 percent less, and among gender non-binary respondents there were lower levels of agreement and higher levels of disagreement. An overwhelming majority of respondents also reported that their co-workers were supportive when they took time off to attend to personal needs, such as taking time off for sick children, or to care for an elderly parent (74% of employees agreed, 12% of employees disagreed). Men had a slightly higher degree of agreement than women (-4% less than males) and a much higher degree of agreement than gender non-binary respondents (-19% less than men). Similarly, high levels of support were reported for leaves associated with the birth or adoption of a child, care of a sick child, or care of an adult family member.

My co-workers were supportive of taking time off to attend to family needs

	All	Female	Male	Gender Non-Binary
Agree	76.2	74.8	80.4	62.9
Undecided	13.8	14.3	12.3	12.3
Disagree	10	10.9	7.4	17.3

FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS

Focus group participants reported high levels of support from supervisors in taking leave for family care purposes. One respondent said she “has worked in five County departments, the County overall has an accepting culture toward leave. She had not been personally affected in a negative way, but some people she has talked to felt they were negatively impacted.” The distinguishing variable between employees who felt well supported and those that did not, was the experience with/capacity of department HR staff rather than interactions with supervisors and colleagues. Specific comments from participants are found in Appendix A.

Key Recommendations

1. Implement a campaign highlighting the County’s family-friendly employment policies. The County should create communication about their use of family-friendly policies, flexible scheduling, protected leave policies, job sharing opportunities, etc., that should be adopted by each HR department.
Implementation Target Date: June 30, 2022
2. Recommend that the Board of Supervisors proclaim a given month as “Protected Leave Awareness Month,” and build an awareness and education campaign to support the designation.

- a. Programming could include the creation of topical weekly newsletters, announcements on myLACounty.gov, and information about related courses available on The Learning Net or Udemy.
- b. Host pre-recorded webinars on employee rights and responsibilities under protected leaves and related leave topics (i.e., disability compliance).

Implementation Target Date: December 30, 2021

- 3. Create a digital “decision-tree” tool to help employees understand what leaves, if any, they may be eligible for, given their needs.
 - a. Conduct education and training on the decision tree for employees, managers, departmental HR managers, and other stakeholders.

Implementation Target Date: June 30, 2022

- 4. Develop capacity building and support tools for departmental lactation coordinators and convene lactation coordinators twice a year to build engagement and share best practices.

Implementation Target Date: December 31, 2021

FINDING 2: Comments from the County focus group reflected some LACECS respondents who felt that taking family leaves might harm their careers.

FROM THE LACECS

Among survey respondents, 46 percent believed that if they needed to take time off or reduce their time at work because of family or personal needs, it would not hurt their chances of promotion or transfer, while one third of employees disagreed with this statement. Men had higher agreement (54%) with this statement; +10.8 percent greater than women and +17.2 percent greater than gender non-binary respondents.

Taking time off or reducing my time at work because of family or personal needs would not hurt my chances of promotion or transfer

	All	Female	Male	Gender Non-Binary
Agree	46.1	43.2	54	36.8
Undecided	23.9	24.1	23.6	21.7
Disagree	29.6	32.7	22.2	42.5

Fifty-two percent of all respondents reported they do NOT feel pressured to choose between advancing in their job or dedicating time to their family/care giving responsibilities. Men had a higher degree of agreement with this statement (58% agreement), compared to women (49% agreement), a difference of +8.8 percent. Among gender non-binary respondents, agreement with this statement was only 33.6 percent (-25% less than males). One third (30%) of respondents felt that taking time off for family responsibilities might affect their career advancement, while 46 percent did not. Women and gender non-binary respondents felt that taking time off would harm their

careers far more than men. Agreement by men was 55 percent; compared to 43 percent agreement by women and 37 percent gender non-binary respondent agreement.

I do not feel pressured to choose between advancing in my job or dedicating time to family/caregiving responsibilities

	All	Female	Male	Gender Non-Binary
Agree	51.8	49.4	58.2	33.6
Undecided	21.8	21.9	21.4	23.3
Disagree	26.5	28.7	20.4	43

FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS

Many focus group participants reported that they did not believe taking family related leaves prevented employees from being promoted but noted that taking family leaves made it more difficult to attain promotions. Specific comments from participants are found in Appendix B.

Key Recommendations

1. DHR should review exam and promotion policies to ensure they align with a family leave friendly culture. DHR should develop a video that reinforces the County’s friendly family leave culture by highlighting the importance for ALL genders to utilize leave when needed.
Implementation Target Date: June 30, 2022
2. Work with the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller to evaluate whether changes to the employee’s Prime Variance Report (PVR) are possible, to either remove reference to protected leaves or limit their visibility to key administrative personnel.
Implementation Target Date: December 31, 2021

FINDING 3: Comments from the County focus group reflected that some employees do not feel or were unsure that they have access to scheduling options that best support their family caregiving responsibilities.

FROM THE LACECS

Among survey respondents, 46 percent of all respondents reported that family demands of employees are taken into consideration when the unit/department schedules events or meetings. One third of employees were uncertain if family demands were taken into consideration in relation to scheduling. Men had a higher degree of agreement with this statement, +5 percent greater than women and +15 percent greater than gender non-binary respondents.

My family demands are taken into consideration when the unit/department schedules events or meetings

	All	Female	Male	Gender Non-Binary
Agree	45.6	42.1	47.1	31.7
Undecided	30.3	31.4	31.1	32.5
Disagree	24.1	26.5	22	35.8

A majority, 56 percent of all respondents, agreed that they had flexibility to change their shift start- and end-times if there was a family issue, they needed to take care of, while 27 percent of employees disagreed with this statement. Men had a higher agreement (60%) with this statement, +6 percent greater than women and +20 percent greater than gender non-binary respondents.

I have flexibility to change my shift start- and end- times if there was a family issue that I needed to take care of

	All	Female	Male	Gender Non-Binary
Agree	55.7	54.1	59.6	39.2
Undecided	17.7	17.6	17.6	17.7
Disagree	26.9	28.4	22.7	43

FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS

Participants expressed a need for more flexibility in the number of hours employees were required to work to be eligible for promotion, and the times and physical working arrangements available to them to complete their job requirements. These focus groups were conducted during the COVID-19 orders to work from home, and participants expressed an increased ability to complete their work and family care responsibilities under the new stay at home orders and appreciated the new flexibility associated with work assignments. Many participants expressed a desire to permanently adopt work from home options once traditional work resumes post-pandemic. Specific comments from participants are found in Appendix C.

Key Recommendations

1. Departments should clearly articulate their scheduling policies and schedule options and eligibility, so that they are easier to understand by their workforce.
Implementation Target Date: December 30, 2021

2. The County should promote a stronger telework culture and encourage departments to offer telework along with alternate work schedules for those positions where an employee's physical presence is not required to fulfill their job function, based on their operational needs.
Implementation Target Date: Ongoing

3. Departments should allow for flexibility of workday scheduling to accommodate child and family care needs based on their operational needs.
Implementation Target Date: Ongoing

FINDING 4: Some focus group respondents reported a lack of understanding regarding how paid time off is associated with family leaves, and as personally being unable to afford to take the maximum amount of time provided by County leave policies.

Paid leave was not a topic included in the battery of questions concerning family leaves in the LACECS, however it was a dominant topic of discussion among the participants of the family friendly leaves focus groups. While it was clear from the LACECS respondents that a large proportion of employees were not taking the maximum amount of time allotted for leave under County policy, it was unclear as to why they were making this decision. Across all focus groups, the conversation quickly and frequently turned to employees sharing that they were not able to take all the family leave time they wanted or needed due to financial constraints. Specific comments from participants are found in Appendix D.

Key Recommendation

1. Continue to explore paid family leave opportunities to address financial constraints that impact an employee's ability to take family leave.
Implementation Target Date: October 1, 2021

A Closer Look at County Mentorship Opportunities

This section explores “County Mentorship Opportunities”⁶ and creates recommendations based on quantitative data collected from employees across the County via the Los Angeles County Employee Climate Survey (LACECS), which was fielded on March 11, 2019. The survey population was County employees, excluding contract employees and some hourly employees with no access to email or the internet at their workstations. The overall response rate was 35 percent (36,103 individual employee respondents), representing all departments within the County.⁷ The Women and Girls Initiative conducted a series of four focus groups on “County Mentorship opportunities” which included 30 participants from 25 departments across the County. We held two mentorship focus groups for employees across the County and two focus groups for employees who had participated in the “Management Fellows Program” administered by DHR. While these numbers are small in comparison to the number of initial survey respondents, we believe that the employee comments provide valuable qualitative data for determining the underlying basis for the reported recommendations. In combining the results of the LACECS and our focus group we arrive at the following findings:

Report Findings

Formal Mentorship in the County

1. A large majority of LACECS respondents and focus group participants who took part in formal mentorship opportunities reported a positive impact on their career, citing the mentor/mentee match as the key determinant of a successful experience.
2. Focus group participants favored Countywide mentorship programs over department specific programs, and mentor/mentee matching with individuals outside of their department.

Informal Mentorship in the County

1. Focus group participants expressed clear support for informal mentorship opportunities, and often cited these relationships as the most important to their success in advancing within the County.

Access to Mentorship in the County

1. Many focus group participants reported not knowing about available mentorship opportunities and that they did not feel all employees had equal access to the opportunities available.
2. Results from the LACECS and focus groups suggest an overall lack of mentors to accommodate all wishing to be mentees when a mentorship opportunity arises.

⁶ According to Forbes (2017) the average completion rate for employee surveys is 30-40 percent.

⁷The WGI produced a primer on the importance of mentorship opportunities for women in the County workforce in response to the original BOS WGI founding motion. The WGI Primer highlights can be found in Appendix E.

LACECS Respondents and Focus Group Participants

More men than women and gender non-conforming respondents viewed female employees receiving equal treatment concerning mentorship and career advancement opportunities. Over one third (37%) of respondents reported having effective mentorship; with substantially more employees reporting participating as a mentor and a mentee in informal mentorship (26%) programs over formal mentorship (16%) programs. Respondents in management positions were more likely to participate and have a positive opinion of mentorship opportunities, than employees not in management positions. While respondents felt they had equal access to general career development resources, many respondents of all genders did not feel they had access to an effective mentor.

All employees have equal access to career development opportunities within the County

	All	Female	Male	Gender Non-Binary
Agree	66.3	66	69	45.4
Undecided	15.8	16.5	14.5	18.2
Disagree	17.8	17.5	16.6	36.4

I have access to an effective mentor

	All	Female	Male	Gender Non-Binary
Agree	36.9	36.1	40.4	23.6
Undecided	22.7	22.3	24.1	19.9
Disagree	40.5	42.3	36	57.2

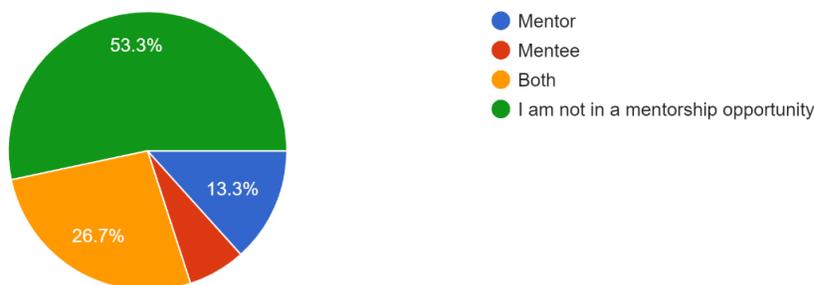
Just over fifteen percent of respondents (16%) reported receiving formal mentorship through a program organized through the County of Los Angeles. Men were most likely to participate in a formal mentorship program, females featured -3 percent less participation and gender non-binary respondents featured -9 percent less participation than male respondents. Respondents that identified themselves as a manager were equally likely to have participated in formal mentorship as respondents who are not managers (approximately 13% in both categories agreed). More respondents participated in informal mentorship opportunities than formal mentorship opportunities within the County (22% agreement on informal participation vs. 14% agreement on formal participation). Females participated -3 percent less than males and gender non-binary respondents in informal mentorships. Respondents that identified themselves as a manager participated in informal mentorship 8 percent more than respondents who are not managers.

Among focus group participants, 47 percent general focus group participants and all participants in the “Management Fellows Program” focus groups stated that they were part of some sort of mentorship opportunity, whether it be formal or informal.

Participants in all types of mentorship opportunities across the County:

If yes, do you participate as a:

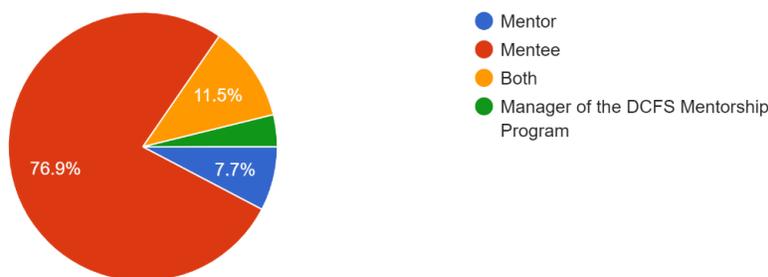
15 responses



Participants from the Management Fellows Program:

Did you participate as a:

26 responses



Formal Mentorship in the County⁸

In July 2020, the WGI fielded a survey concerning formal mentorship programs in existence within the individual County departments. We found six of fifteen responding departments reported having a formal departmental mentorship program.⁹ In addition to department mentorship groups, the WGI held two focus groups of participants recruited from the Countywide “Management Fellows Program.” The following results are from these focus group conversations and follow-up survey.

FINDING 1: Many focus group participants reported not knowing about available mentorship opportunities and that they did not feel all employees had equal access to the opportunities available.

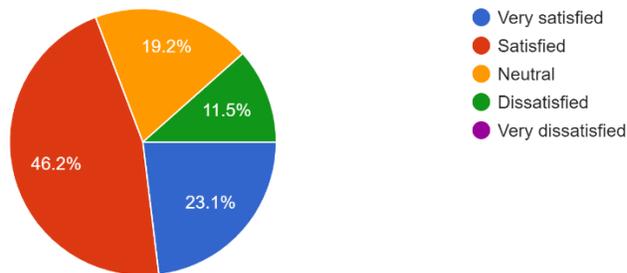
⁸ Key comments from focus group participants on their experience in formal mentorship programs can be found in Appendix F.

⁹ The findings for this survey can be found in Appendix G.

Participants were overwhelmingly satisfied with their participation in a formal mentorship opportunity and reported that such participation had a positive impact on their careers and advancement in the County. 70 percent of participants were satisfied with their experience and 80 percent of participants said their experience had a positive impact on their careers.

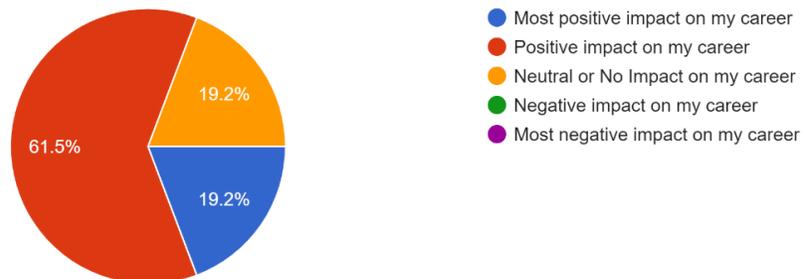
How satisfied were you with your participation in the mentorship program?

26 responses



How much of an impact did participating in a mentorship program have on your career?

26 responses



Participants who were the most and least enthusiastic about their formal mentorship experience cited their actual mentor as the largest reason for their experience. Across all focus groups participants commented on the importance of good matches along the lines of similar career goals, similar personalities, and similar program expectations/time to devote to the program. One participant praised his participation in a mentorship program, saying “they [program administrators] really took the time to find me the right fit and introduced us to one another prior to taking on the mentorship relationship. It also helped us establish a schedule that we could both commit to but also be accountable to.” Another participant with a more negative experience commented, “my mentee and I could not figure out why we were paired together... felt like an afterthought or just a forced pairing because perhaps they were running low on folks.”

FINDING 2: Focus group participants favored Countywide mentorship programs over department specific programs, and mentor/mentee matching with individuals outside of their department.

Across all focus groups most participants said they preferred Countywide formal mentorship opportunities, compared to department specific programs. The benefits identified of inter-department placements were: to better understand the career possibilities within the County; to gain a better understanding of all that the County does; the ability to talk openly about work-related problems that may involve their managers to seek external advice; and psychological benefits, as one participant put it, “knowing that I have someone that has my best interest at heart that isn't in my branch.” The pie chart below shows an overwhelming preference for Countywide programs from the “Management Fellow Program” focus group population. One participant recommended, “I would make it mandatory for all County employees. Every new hire should be connected with a mentor that is at a higher level in their job path, but not in the same supervisory chain so as to allow both parties to feel comfortable discussing day to day challenges.”

Key Recommendations

1. County should develop a Countywide guide on how to be an effective mentor.
Implementation Target Date: June 30, 2022
2. County should have MAPP goals for mentors. Department of Human Resources will propose suggested goals.
Implementation Target Date: June 30, 2022
3. County should develop standardized mentorship program that is based on best practices and best matching criteria, utilizing technology whenever possible.
Implementation Target Date: To Be Determined.
4. County should have annual Mentor get together to share best practices.
Implementation Target Date: To Be Determined.
5. Mentors should be recognized at BOS meeting.
Implementation Target Date: To Be Determined.

Informal Mentorship in the County¹⁰

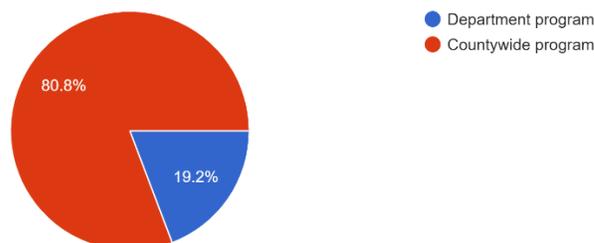
FINDING 1: Focus group participants expressed clear support for informal mentorship opportunities, and often cited these relationships as the most important to their success in advancing within the County.

All participants reported having a mentor that was critical to their success in the County and many who participated in formal mentorship programs also reported having an informal mentor that also gave them career critical advice. The effect of having a personal mentor was pronounced for female participants, one commenting, “it is important to be

¹⁰ Key comments from focus group participants on their experience with informal mentorship can be found in Appendix H.

pairing women of color and women with lived experiences” and another female participant, who noted she was the highest ranking woman in her department, said “I relied heavily on the other female chief as a mentor and called on her quite a bit for help navigating. Especially as you move up a rank it’s nice to have someone to confide in or ask questions to.” Participants also cited that it was essential to have advocates in management in order to receive promotions, one participant said, “there’s a certain way you get promoted and no way around it based on seniority and rules, but after a certain point it’s mainly about who you know and who knows you.” Participants favored the

Would your ideal mentorship opportunity be led by your department leadership or a countywide program?
26 responses



County providing more “social” opportunities for prospective mentees and mentors to meet and some guidance on how to pursue forming mentorship relationships outside a formal program. One participant commented “I literally googled ‘how to find a mentor’ and ‘what to ask your mentor’” but went on to say the informal mentorship relationship he developed was key to his deciding to move to another department to advance his career in a satisfying way.

Key Recommendations

1. County should develop a Guide to Selecting A Mentor. (use video, webinar, something engaging to be the guide)
Implementation Target Date: October 31, 2022
2. Management should encourage midlevel managers to have a mentor and allow time for mentor meetings. In the reverse Management should encourage managers to serve as mentors.
Implementation Target Date: Ongoing
3. Training on how to be an effective mentor for all levels.
Implementation Target Date: To Be Determined.
4. Training on how to be an effective mentee for all levels. Entry level positions should be assigned a mentor within a standardized timeframe.
Implementation Target Date: To Be Determined.

Access to Mentorship in the County ¹¹

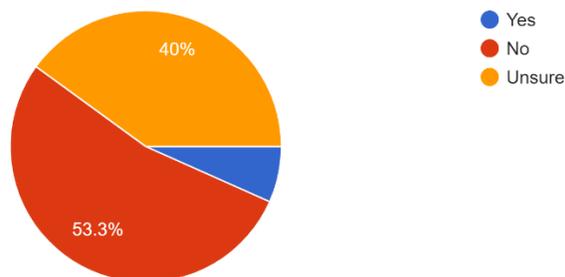
FINDING 1: Many focus group participants reported not knowing about available mentorship opportunities and that they did not feel all employees had equal access to the opportunities available.

Half of the participants in our general mentorship focus groups reported that they did not feel they knew about mentorship opportunities available to them and another 40 percent were unsure. Across both our general focus groups and our “Management Fellows Program” focus groups, most participants did not feel that all employees have equal access to the mentorship opportunities available. Results for both groups are reported in the pie graphs below. Those that reported they had knowledge of and access to mentorship opportunities were more likely to participate in such opportunities and cite significant benefits to their careers because of their participation.

Participants in all types of mentorship opportunities across the County:

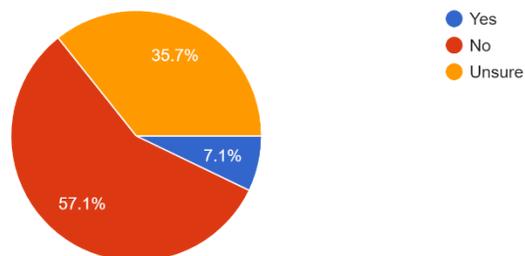
Do you feel you are aware of all available mentorship opportunities?

15 responses



e. Do you feel everyone has the same access to be able to participate in mentorship opportunities in your department?

14 responses

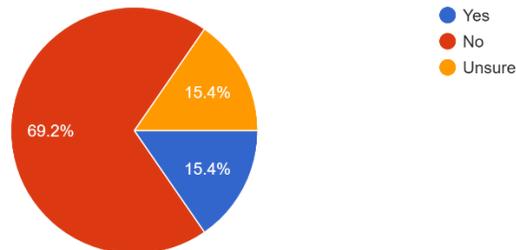


¹¹ Key comments from focus group participants on their experience with informal mentorship can be found in Appendix H.

Participants from the Management Fellows Program:

e. Do you feel everyone has the same access to be able to participate in mentorship opportunities in your department?

26 responses



FINDING 2: Results from the LACECS and focus groups suggest an overall lack of mentors to accommodate all wishing to be mentees when a mentorship opportunity arises.

Across focus groups, participants reported that they had experienced or witnessed experiencing instances where there were fewer mentors available than mentees in a particular program. One female participant summarized her experience as follows, “I’ve been with the County for 35 years and have never gotten into a mentorship program, but I have sought out coaches after I did not get in. Mentorship shouldn’t feel like a task, coaching may be better since it’s more about dropping in to give advice.” A recently launched departmental mentorship program also reported considerably more applications among prospective mentees than mentors, yielding a high number of individuals unable to participate in the program. Participants also commented on the time requirements of management that made it difficult for more managers to participate successfully in a formal mentorship program. There was a suggestion that assuring better mentor/mentee matches might make it more attractive for managers to participate as mentors in mentorship opportunities. There was also a sense that program rigidity reduced the number of those willing to be mentors, instead emphasizing flexibility as a key to attracting more mentors.

Key Recommendations

1. Develop short-term informal Countywide mentorship program based on flexibility, use of technology and best practices.
Implementation Target Date: To Be Determined.
2. Develop Countywide marketing/communication campaign when newly established mentorship programs kick off.
Implementation Target Date: To Be Determined.

Appendix A:

Focus group comments concerning experiences with taking protected leaves

Generally Positive Experiences:

- One participant felt very supported to take leave and knew things would be handled. The department's culture was very supportive and valued employees having all they needed "(whether family or personal leave)."
- One participant felt very supported. They were sent reminders from the department about what was available to them and encouraged them to reach out if they had questions or concerns.

Generally Negative Experiences:

- One participant felt that when she got a higher ranked position, she was very unsupported by her female manager and was questioned a lot about her "motives." The policies to support people are technically in place, but the support is not there, and there should be more outreach. When she took baby bonding time, her boss told her that the baby was 'plenty bonding', and she should not be taking another leave.

Experiences Shaped by Department HR Offices:

- One participant shared her experiences in taking leaves differed greatly from one department to another. Her smaller department was very supportive about taking leave, but she did not know if she felt comfortable talking to HR about taking leave. When she asked about taking leave at her new, larger department she said that she was just handed a County policy book and said that no one sat down with her to talk about it and explain things.
- One participant has taken leave twice, ten years ago and last year. She noted there was a change over the last ten years, even though she was employed in the same department. The first time she took leave, she went to HR for help and was only more confused afterward. With the more recent time, she was assigned to a Return-to-Work (RTW) coordinator who helped communicate with her. She had to extend her leave due to a personal injury and felt the RTW coordinator was very helpful in giving her the information she needed. Communication generally was more open.
- One participant took three months of leave after being hired. She reported that it was a very confusing time since she was still trying to get acquainted with the job and with the County's culture. She took leave for pregnancy and felt her team was supportive; however, she was still very confused about what leaves she qualified

for (did not qualify for FMLA). When it came to her departmental HR, they did not help her understand what was available to her. Two other coworkers took leave at the same time, but everyone was supportive.

- One participant felt well supported by their supervisor, but the process with her departmental HR was not great. The leave process was not well explained, she did not receive good guidance or information, and she was handed a packet with no explanation. The participant said that she had to ask friends and colleagues to get information. She was gone for 3 months on maternity leave and had to figure out a lot on her own.
- One participant shared that she took leave for a few reasons, and that levels of support varied based on the type of leave she took. The process to take leave was not clear or direct, and the person in her department's HR office made a big difference since that person changed.
- One participant took leave for a couple months and felt supported by her supervisor and by her departmental HR. Since this was a smaller department, she could email the departmental HR director easily with questions and would get a response, she had help with forms, and a departmental HR person went over leave eligibility.
- One participant tried taking a leave and found it difficult, saying that her departmental HR staff were not very forthcoming. She had to be proactive about asking questions and they did not reply very well. Since then she has learned more about leaves and in her experience feels that she almost guides her departmental HR through the leave process. There are issues in the department with taking leave not being perceived well.
- One participant commented on behalf of her department co-workers, staff said support from management and executives is good, but internally (on a cultural level) people might be afraid to take leave (men and women) because they feel they are losing opportunities to promotional opportunities. There were questions about whether mothers would be able to breastfeed longer and be accommodated? Even though there may be support from management, concerns regarding peer pressure and fear of future repercussions might be impacting their choices.
- One participant commented that the person needing leave had to know the right person to speak with to get questions answered and to get the needed time off. She shared her experience in dealing with different departmental HR representatives, noting that even though they have the same position, some of

them do their work in a completely different way. The participant said that she created a calendar to help herself, and her departmental HR ended up using the calendar as well.

- One participant noted that upon returning from maternity leave she was not aware that there was a lactation center available and had decided to go with formula since she did not know that she could pump at work. She noted that she asked if there was a lactation room available and never heard back. She shared that it was a struggle to get back to work and manage her family, so she made a choice to switch to formula. More information is needed so employees understand the support available to them.

Participant Ideas to Improve HR Practices:

- Departmental HR personnel should be better about answering questions, providing clear and concise instructions about how leaves are taken. Instead of leaving it up to departments it should be uniform.
- Participants recommended creating a booklet with a graph that shows FMLA, PDL, and other things. Graphics would help illustrate how to use the leaves, when they overlap, etc. Given that there are so many variables (money, timing, etc.) that come into play, and that the County has a lot of benefits people need to know how to use them.
- One participant suggested just having one-on-one contact with a departmental HR representative and having an informational packet is key; it was underscored that having a person understand your specific needs is important to offer tailored recommendations.

Appendix B:

Focus group comments concerning the impact of taking protected leaves on career advancement

- One participant felt people perceive taking a leave of absence as a bad thing, sharing that she heard comments like, “promotion will be harder after you’ve taken too much time on leave.” She did note that things have gotten better over time.
- One participant did not think of promotions as preventing her leave but knew there were disadvantages to taking time off. She chose to take a leave even though she thought it might result in a reduced ability to be promoted. By the third time she took a leave of absence to have a child, she knew what she needed for her family but knew it would impact her in other ways. She concluded that when thinking of taking a leave of absence it was necessary to entertain tradeoffs.
- One participant said that when trying to take a leave for the first time, she did get some questions about whether she was making the correct choice. Instead of taking six weeks of time off, she only took two weeks believing that it would be less impactful to her career.
- One participant commented that family leave is not being applied consistently. She shared that people feel that grounds maintenance staff in her department do not receive as much leave as people with more traditional in office jobs, so some people benefit more than others. She noted that her department was exploring this discrepancy.
- One participant said even though family leave can be supported by management, it still harms the employee, and that it takes time to understand the impact. After having three children she was in a place where she was not going to be promoted, explaining that an exam would open and those results would be applicable for three years; because of timing and family leave she would not have the opportunity to be on the list or be eligible for a new job.
- One participant was only out for 30 days after the birth of her son because she got a call from her supervisor that a new program was starting (based on a Board motion), and if she wanted the chance to grow, she needed to come back from leave, or get left behind. She felt forced to come back, since she was basically told she would get left behind. She struggled with coming back to work, and ultimately made the choice to return.
- One participant reported that she took FMLA a few years ago and did not find it hard to advance her career as a result, but she did feel that she had to work more hours, late at night when her kids were asleep. She stated that at some point she

would have to choose to stop trying to advance because the stress of getting more work with promotions on top of family responsibilities was too much to handle.

Appendix C:

Focus group comments concerning flexible scheduling

- After returning from a leave, one participant came back to a part-time schedule. She shared that she could not get a promotion since she was not at work on full time basis. After her second leave of absence, although she placed in Band 1 on a promotion list, she was not promoted. She said that although she was working 30 hours a week, she felt that she was producing like a full-time employee, so she felt it was unfair and talked to her management; her management said it was a policy, and she would have to work full time and the same hours as staff to be promoted. She asked to see the policy in writing, and never heard back. After her last leave of absence, she returned to work full-time and got promoted. Her immediate supervisors were supportive, but she did struggle to advance. She hopes for more accommodating schedules and policies to help people transition into the workforce after a leave.
- One participant noted she wanted to slowly return to work, and that it was helpful that her supervisors let her re-enter slowly but noted that not all employees have that option.
- Once participant said when she returned to work (sooner than she would have liked), she was not her most productive self for a while, and that it took time to adjust because she was preoccupied with being away from her baby. She found the childcare system to be very difficult to navigate, and her commute ended up being an hour and 45 minutes. More working from home options would have alleviated the stress of this transition.
- One participant noted when she went back to work after her first leave of absence she found it challenging because she had not accumulated enough sick or vacation time, and she did not have enough accrued time to take off when she or her baby got sick. Since she was new to the County, she had not accrued much time off, and consequently she felt she was not protected at all. She also noted that more flexible scheduling would allow her to complete her work and adjust for her new baby's needs.

Appendix D:

Focus group comments concerning employee pay and protected leaves

- One participant felt encouraged to take leave, but because a significant portion of the leave time she was going to take would be unpaid, she was not able to take as much leave as she wanted. Her impression is the higher up a position is (and the higher the pay), there is more flexibility; she believes that when the position is at a higher-level departments want to work with the employee to make sure the leave goes well. She said that economic inequality is a huge impacting factor, since logistically not all women can take the time that they need.
- One participant said that overall, her department was very informative. Her department sent her information and then had her write out any questions she had even meeting with them. The participant noted that in her experience that taking a leave of absence mainly comes down to economics- and that money is what drives how much time someone can afford to take; she shared that this was what influenced her to come back from leave sooner, rather than what she had originally wanted.
- One participant felt supported by her direct supervisor and her departmental HR to take leave but had to return to work due to financial considerations.
- One participant did not take all the leave she knew she was entitled to because she and her husband did not make enough money to cover the loss of income they would incur if she had taken the full leave available to her.
- One participant did not understand the different pay rates associated with the different types of leave so did not take leave for fear of not being able to afford the time off.

Appendix E:

Primer on Women and Mentorship

The Problem to be Researched:

From the December 13, 2016, Implementation of the Los Angeles County Initiative on Women and Girls Board Motion, “The County as Employer: The County is the largest employer in our region. Of the County’s 88,960 full-time employees, 59.2 percent are women. Women hold 58.4 percent of all County Executive Management and Management positions...Despite the overall representation of women in our workforce, gender-based income disparity still exists. Women and men do not occupy highly compensated jobs with the same frequency.” This Board motion tasked the WGI with investigating and proposing recommendations to close these gaps in the County workforce. Focusing on innovative mentorship programs is a key component of our strategy.

Why the WGI is concerned with mentorship?

The reality in the workforce is that 80 percent of job opportunities come from who you know (Department of Labor). Relationships = opportunity. Thus, a key mechanism for improving the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in the workforce is through formal mentorship programs. Women are far more likely than their male colleagues to cite mentorship as a key feature of success in their career. A recent study by the American Association of University Women found that:

- Many women choose to leave an organization because they do not believe their abilities are valued by their leaders, but mentoring can help to create a perception of work for the participants. These women see that their organizations are willing to invest in their leadership goals and their desire to move forward in their careers. This also helps increase employee retention for the organization.
- Mentoring helps to give women a push in the right direction. They are given a safe place to articulate their career ambitions and put a plan in place to achieve them.
- Mentoring relationship holds women accountable to achieve their career goals. Not only are they putting their goals out there, but their mentor is helping to keep them on track and push them in the right direction to achieve success.
- Building a solid network is a great benefit that all participants can receive from mentoring, but this is especially important for women. Many women believe that men are more capable of networking, but having a mentor opens new possibilities to build a professional network that they may not have had access to before.
- One of the most important parts of being a leader is being able to have confidence in your abilities perform necessary tasks and make tough decisions. Mentoring gives women access to new skills and competencies that help them to build the confidence necessary to be an effective and successful leader.

Mentorship and the growing number of millennials in the workforce

By 2025, 75 percent the world's workforce will be millennials and prior to that time a significant portion of the County's workforce will be millennials. While the County traditionally has a very low attrition rate, millennials are the most "job hopping generation in history" according to Forbes. Millennials represent the most educated and most diverse female population to enter the workforce in American history; and female millennials with college degrees will outnumber their male counterparts. This will also represent the greatest proportion of women to be employed outside the home. One benefit critical to attracting and retaining qualified millennials is opportunities for career development. A study by Deloitte found that 71 percent of millennials will leave a company within two years if they believe their skills are not being developed. They further found that millennials are not just looking for mentorship, they are looking for mentoring programs that work for them. From a gender equity perspective, it is critical that the County develop a comprehensive mentorship program as a means of recruiting and retaining millennials in County employment as an important component of a larger strategy to evaluate, and address as necessary, any remaining gender gaps in County employment.

Appendix F:

Key comments on formal mentorship program experiences from focus group participants

- “It empowered me to seek a mentor that was willing to spend time sharing his or her experience and knowledge with me. While the assigned mentor was not the most available person, I was empowered enough to seek a mentor that would help me and offer his guidance. I ended up with many different mentors in different areas.”
- “Having an excuse to talk to people that had good insights into what I needed to succeed. I had an amazing mentor - she helped me understand the way the County works and how to build my career.”
- “[My mentor] had an open-door policy and I could discuss anything with him. No topic was off limits. Knowing that I have someone that has my best interest at heart that isn't in my branch was important to me.”
- “I would change the way the mentors are selected or encouraged to interact with mentees. While a formal system might set up something that can be measured, it does not help identify or foster the personal connection that is necessary for a mentor mentee relationship to work. One suggestion would be to use a small bit of funding to pay for mentors and mentees to get coffee together and facilitate conversation. Other suggestions would include an informal mixer of sorts to allow people to get to know each other and find people to mentor. Like "speed dating" that was mentioned, you could allow the mentees to choose a mentor and allow the manager to pick and choose between the mentees. Or vis-a-versa.”
- “Had a [formal] mentor who was a high-level executive and relationship was awkward, they had very little time. It was cordial but did not feel organic or natural. In that case, a group activity may have helped things develop differently. Having situations align and genuine fondness and desire to help has been great for informal mentorships.
- “In a more formal setting the questions are more specific, having some structure can be helpful. In a way it relieves responsibility from people having to come up with what to talk about.”
- “Mentorship programs seem to struggle with understanding what skills people have and could be mentors for. We all have different understanding of what mentorship means and how it could be structured. Ultimately, the mentor also must be empowered in knowing what skills they can pass on. Interests of mentees should align with strengths of mentor. I had a mentor who helped encourage me to go to arts and culture, even though many others were pushing me to library which was not quite as good of a fit.”

Appendix G:

Formal Mentorship in County Departments Survey Results

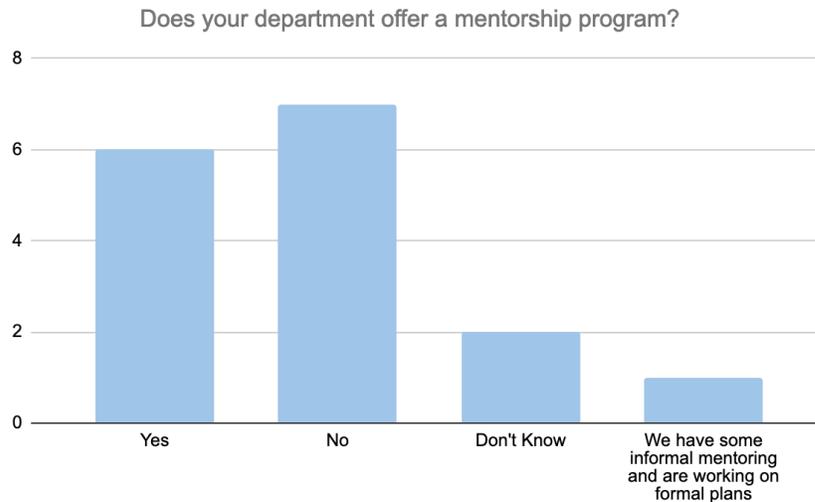
Overview

In July 2020, the WGI developed a survey around existing mentorship opportunities at the County departmental level and distributed the survey to department representatives at the management level. The WGI received responses from a total of 18 individuals at 16 different County departments. There were numerous responses from different individuals within DHR, which accounts for the difference between individual responses and departments represented in the survey responses. While WGI did not receive responses from every department, it seems likely that departments that *do* have a mentorship program would have been more inclined to respond to the survey than those who know they do not. While we cannot say this definitively without speaking to management from each department, the survey responses likely provide representative insight into existing programs within the County.

Existence of Formal Mentorship Programs

Out of the 16 departments represented, the results indicate that only six departments do currently provide a mentorship program to their employees. Several departmental representatives indicated they are unsure if their department offers a mentorship program, and one department, Probation, indicated they have a mentorship program in development. Figure 1 shows these results. While not all departments are represented in the survey findings, overall, the responses indicate there is ample room to aid departments in structuring and enacting mentorship programs to benefit their employees. Figure 2 shows the Departments and whether the respondent indicated they have a formal mentorship program or not.

Figure 1.



Mentorship Program Logistics

Length of Mentorship Program: Of the eight responses to the question, 'What is the length of the mentorship program? Four individuals indicated the program was six or more months in length, and four indicated the program was 4-6 months. No individuals indicated their departments' program lasted only 0-2 or 2-4 months, indicating most County programs are at least 4 months in length.

Dedication of Time: The majority of responses to the question 'Do you have a required number of hours per month that the mentor and mentee must meet? If so, how many hours?' indicated that there was no requirement about how much time the mentee and mentor should meet, or that the amount of time varied. One respondent indicated the two were required to meet once a week, and one respondent indicated the two were required to meet 3-5 hours per month.

Funding and Resources: Only two respondents indicated their departments allocate any funding to the program, and both described it as the cost of training materials and a manager's time to facilitate the program.

Assessment: Three respondents noted that they do attempt to measure the success of the program in a formal way, with one department using a survey and the other two listed their method as 'other.'

Concluding Thoughts

These findings provide a case for the need to aid departments in creating successful mentorship programs for their employees. The feedback gathered throughout the series of focus groups around mentorship provide a more nuanced and detailed view at how employees view these programs, and what aspects can make them successful or unsuccessful.

Appendix H:

Key comments on informal mentorship program experiences from focus group participants

- “Being able to discuss openly the challenges encountered working within the County and receiving advice on how best to adapt to and manage said challenges having a mentor that I chose was very valuable.”
- “I go to some of the clubs with the county (Asian Americans in management, etc.) this has been a good way to meet people and figure out what people are looking for, and how we can help each other. I prefer the informal opportunities.”
- “There are questions I wouldn’t really go to my formal mentor with, so it’s nice to have a more casual/organic relationship, sometimes you just need to vent or a shoulder to cry on and you wouldn’t do that with your formal mentor.”
- “For someone with some level of county experience, informal is probably better, allows for freedom of discussing county culture, ins and outs of what it’s like to work there. Maybe levels of mentorship should be considered, where cohorts are in their career should impact the mentorship they get. The length of time also matters- once a mentor passes on knowledge, they might be expecting mentee to take the same exact path. I had a mentor once like this, and it was awkward to communicate that their path didn’t make as much sense for me.”
- “There are a lot of value to mentoring within the County, a lot of opportunities exist through networking and mentoring that lets you establish relationships with other partners in the County.”
- “Informal mentorship helps get onto the radar of other people because you have someone who is vouching for you. The downside of informal is that if that person leaves, it makes you a little bit lost. Formal would allow people to see the value of mentorship.”
- “The networking, exposure, and learning about your capabilities allows opportunities that you may not have otherwise be considered for. It gives you the opportunity to show things such as work ethic that will help you in your career.”
- “The downside of informal is that you don’t want to offer commitment to someone and then leave them.”